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S P E E C H

OF

MR. THOS. S. FLOURNOY, OF VA.,

ON THE

CIVIL AND DIPLOMATIC BILL.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES,

J U L Y 3 D, 1848.

W A S H I N G T O N:

J. AND G. S. GIDEON, PRINTERS.

1848.

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S P E E C H .

The House being in Committee of the Whole, and having under consideration the bill making appropriations for the Civil and Diplomatic expenses of the Government.

Mr. FLOURNOY, of Virginia, addressed the Committee as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have listened with much attention to the remarks of the gentleman from Georgia, (Mr. COBB,) and, though a gentleman of undoubted ability, he has not met the powerful argument of his colleague, (Mr. TOOMBS,) nor come to the rescue of the so-called Democratic Platform, which reeled and tottered under his heavy blows. He has consumed his whole hour, or nearly so, in assaults upon the Whig party, because the Philadelphia Convention did not erect for it, in modern phrase, a platform; because it did not adopt a string of resolutions as an exposé of its political faith, by which to bind and pledge its nominees; and for its failure to do so, is pleased to charge it with error and inconsistency, and a design to practise a fraud upon the country.

It is not my purpose, Mr. Chairman, to reply to these attacks of the gentleman from Georgia at this time, or to analyze the rickety offspring of the Baltimore Convention, presented with great parade and circumstance to the country as the platform of Democratic principles. I have asked the attention of the committee, that I may present some views which I entertain upon a subject of deep and exciting interest to the whole country, and of vital interest to the South—I mean the institution of slavery—and to examine the attitude of the two great parties of the country—the Whig and Democratic—in reference to it; or, in other words, to examine the position of the two parties in reference to the so-called Wilmot proviso, and see which occupies the safe and more conservative position upon this all-absorbing question. I think that I shall be able to show that the South will find its safety in the elevation of the Whig party to power, and that it will be endangered, and the preservation of this Union put to hazard, by permitting the Government to remain in the possession of the Democratic party.

It is not my purpose, Mr. Chairman, to enter into a discussion of the abstract question, or to inquire whether the institution of slavery be a moral, political, and social blessing or curse. If it be, as many suppose it, an evil, we of the South incur no moral responsibility by continuing its existence, for that is unavoidable; and the South will ever be found ready to resist any and every encroachment, from whatever quarter, upon her rights in connexion with this insti-

tution. She sees involved in it her peace and her existence, and she will never consent that it shall become the foot-ball of party, be dragged into the political arena, and mingled with the party issues and party conflicts of the day, for the purpose of making or unmaking Presidents. It is a question that can never become, with propriety, an issue between the two great parties of the country, as at present organized; it is, in its very nature, sectional, and when parties divide upon it, the present party lines will be obliterated, and the division will be Northern and Southern. I have observed, during the present session, whenever the question of slavery has been presented in any shape to the consideration of this body, the South, without distinction of party, have been united—Whigs and Democrats voting together to sustain her rights and interests, and Whigs and Democrats of the North voting pretty much together in support of northern views. What patriotic heart, Mr. Chairman, North or South, would not sicken and despond, and be filled with fearful forebodings for the future, in witnessing a struggle between the two great divisions of this Union, for the highest office within the gift of this great people, upon a local, sectional question?

Mr. Chairman, in the name of those I have the honor to represent on this floor I protest—aye, solemnly protest—against mingling this question with the party issues and party elections of the country; as I love this Union, the glorious work and invaluable bequest of a noble and patriotic ancestry, I protest against it; it is a question above party, and demands, by its importance, that it shall stand separate from the party organizations of the day, and here, by its action, the Whig party has placed it. The Whig Convention, held in Philadelphia on the 7th day of June, repudiated it as a party issue. After the ticket had been formed, presenting to the country, for President and Vice President, the names of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore, resolutions containing the principles of the Wilmot proviso were twice offered to that body for its adoption, and as often laid on the table by an overwhelming majority, the vote in favor of laying them on the table being at least twenty to one; thus did that body declare, that this question had no proper connexion with the election of Chief Magistrate for this Republic, and ought not, and should not, control their votes in the approaching election; that it did not desire or intend to subject the interests of the South, connected with this absorbing question, to the hazard and danger which would inevitably result from dragging it into the arena of party politics, and connecting it with the excitements, prejudices, passions, interests, and tricks, which are inseparable from the contests and struggles of parties in Presidential elections. That Convention assembled in a spirit of patriotic devotion, looking alone to the peace, the prosperity, and the happiness of our whole country, and the preservation of this Union from the dangers which threaten it; it eschewed, as the Whig party has ever done, all identity, as a party, with the interests or institutions of any particular locality or section;

but kept itself, as it has hitherto done, and still does, aloof from all such entanglements, so that when it gets into power, and the interests of the country are confided to a Whig administration, it may, untrammelled, look abroad upon the whole land, and by its action reconcile and harmonize the conflicting interests of the various members and sections of this great family of States, and advance the general prosperity; looking, as its guide, not to the platforms of party Conventions, but to the Constitution—the great charter of our liberty.

Mr. Chairman, not only did the Whig Convention at Philadelphia, with an overwhelming majority, lay on the table the resolutions offered to that body for its adoption, upon this vexed and disturbing question, but I have observed with pleasure and satisfaction that the Whig people of the North are actuated by the same national and patriotic feeling which controlled that Convention. But the other day, in the city of New York, at one of the largest gatherings of the people ever assembled in that great commercial emporium, numbering by report some thirty thousand or more, the following resolution was adopted by acclamation :

"Resolved, That we deprecate sectional issues in a national canvass, as dangerous to the Union and injurious to the public good;—that we look with confidence to a Whig National Administration to remove all causes for such issues;—and that we will countenance no faction in the Whig party, and no coalition with any faction out of it, which shall threaten to array one section of our common country in angry hostility against any other."

But, sir, it has been asked, if the northern Whigs lay their votes in Convention intended to indicate a change in their view as to the principles of the Wilmot proviso. Upon this question I will not deceive myself, nor do I intend to attempt to deceive others. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. ASHMUN) says, that a majority of the members of that Convention from the North approve the principles of the proviso, and I do not suppose that their views are at all changed upon that question by the votes which they gave to lay it on the table; nor do I suppose that the Whigs of New York have changed their opinions, but I imagine, that each and all of them, when called upon to vote, either in their individual or representative capacities, would cast their votes in accordance with the views which they have hitherto entertained upon this subject. But while their votes and acts will indicate no change of opinion, they declare this, that the Whigs of the North are not governed by a wild, reckless, and destructive fanaticism; that they love this Union, appreciate its benefits, and desire its preservation; that they will not consent "to array one section of our common country in angry hostility against any other," by introducing sectional issues into a "National canvass." That they deprecate as dangerous to our free institutions a geographical division of parties, and that they do not intend to disregard the feelings, interests, and rights of the South, by connecting this subject of slavery with the triumphs or defeats of party; but desire to see it kept separate and apart, to be considered upon its own

merits, without passion, and with that calmness and coolness which its importance demands.

We have in all this, sir, assurance that the Whig party have a deep attachment to this Union, and that they will preserve it; that though there is much difference of opinion as to the powers of the Federal Government over the Territories, and as to the propriety of the exclusion of slavery, yet, when this question, which has been brought upon the country and into the councils of the nation by the acquisition of New Mexico and California, shall be presented for final settlement and adjustment, it will be considered and acted upon in a spirit of patriotism; the recollections of the past and the bright hopes of the future will not be disregarded. We shall see in union, strength, and a glorious destiny; in disunion, weakness, civil strife, and a gloomy and uncertain future. The memories of our fathers will not be forgotten; the spirit of concession and compromise which enabled them to frame this Government, and establish this Union for the preservation of that liberty which they so heroically won, and which we now enjoy, will be found still to exist in the bosoms of their descendants.

Mr. Chairman, I will now look to the position of the Democratic party upon this great question; (and, without questioning the motives or the patriotism of gentlemen on the opposite side of this Hall,) I think I shall be able to show, that by their course of policy the Democratic party have placed this peculiar institution of the South in a false and dangerous attitude. The Baltimore Convention, constituting itself the peculiar guardian of the interests of the South, has given the institution of slavery a prominent place in its platform of Democratic principles by the adoption of a resolution declarative of its opinions upon that subject, which is, however, couched in such language as to render it uncertain as to what extent it meant to deny the power of this Government over it—the members of that party on this floor disagreeing among themselves as to its proper construction; and it is thus presented as an issue in the approaching Presidential election, and endeavored to be made a test of fitness for office, exposed to all the perils and disasters of party warfare. And, not content with the assumption that they stand erect upon this question, southern Democrats are almost daily rising in their places here, and asking how Zachary Taylor is upon it? What are his opinions? Will he veto the Wilmot proviso, if it should be passed by Congress? I answer them that, as far as I am informed, he has said nothing upon that subject; he has never mentioned it or referred to it in any communication that I have seen from him; he has passed it by as a question not belonging to a National canvass. I will ask southern gentlemen if they fear Zachary Taylor upon this question? Do they believe that he cannot be trusted when the rights of the South are involved? If they do not fear him, why ask the question? Do they expect to make the South believe

that Lewis Cass has a higher and more especial regard for her peculiar interests than Zachary Taylor? In preferring this inquiry, our Democratic friends cannot have looked well to the position of Lewis Cass; they must have forgotten that he is but a new convert, if indeed he has really changed his opinion, and become a "Northern man with Southern principles." In examining the official paper (the Union) of March 2d, 1847, giving the proceedings of the Senate of March 1st, 1847, I find the following report of a discussion between Mr. MILLER and General CASS:

"After General CASS had concluded his speech, in which he took the ground that it was improper at this time to adopt the Wilmot Proviso, because its adoption now might prevent the acquisition of any territory from Mexico—

"Mr. MILLER, of New Jersey, expressed his great surprise at the change in the sentiments of the Senator from Michigan, who had been regarded as the great champion of freedom in the Northwest, of which he was a distinguished ornament. Last year the Senator from Michigan was understood to be decidedly in favor of the Wilmot Proviso; and, as no reason had been stated for the change, he (Mr. M.) could not refrain from the expression of his extreme surprise.

"Mr. CASS said that the course of the Senator from New Jersey was most extraordinary. Last year he (Mr. C.) should have voted for the proposition had it come up. But circumstances had altogether changed. The honorable Senator then read several passages from the remarks as given above, which he had committed to writing, in order to refute such a charge as that of the Senator from New Jersey."

So General CASS did not admit that he had changed his opinion as to the power of this Government over the question of slavery in the Territories, but denied the charge of the Senator from New Jersey. He thought it inexpedient to adopt the Wilmot Proviso at that time, as it might prevent the acquisition of any territory from Mexico. The change in his constitutional views is of a still more recent date; and, to what extent this change may have been effected by the prospect of a nomination by the Baltimore Convention for the high office of President, I will not pretend to say. I am not dealing with motives, but facts, from which others are as competent as myself to draw correct conclusions. General Cass is not a young and inexperienced politician; his friends represent him as an able man, a profound jurist, and ripe statesman. How, then, does it happen that, having formed a mature and deliberate opinion favorable to the exercise of this power, he should have, in the last twelve months, changed that opinion, and now deny to Congress the power? Would it not at least be becoming in General Cass and his friends to be a little modest, and not be over anxious to press this question into the canvass?

There is another fact that the people of the South have not forgotten. They

have a vivid recollection that, in times gone by, there was another Northern Democrat who sought and won their confidence and support by making professions of peculiar regard for Southern interests, and who was called, by way of distinction, "The Northern man with Southern principles." Where is he now, and what is his position? He is now the candidate of the Barnburners; he has turned with base ingratitude upon the South, and is the representative of a sectional organization, in open and avowed hostility to Southern interests and institutions, and is the first example of one who has had the confidence and support of the country for the highest office within the gift of this free people, who has been found ready to lend his name and influence, regardless of consequences, to such a mischievous and dangerous policy; and, should he succeed under the influence of a temporary and fanatical excitement, which God forbid, and which I do not fear, and the disunion of these States ensue, which would be inevitable, the good, the wise, and patriotic every where will heap bitter curses upon his head. Unborn generations will hold up his name to the scorn and reproach of ages yet to come. History will record him as one who, for the gratification of his own selfish ambition, did not hesitate to sacrifice his own Government, the freest and best on earth, under the influence of whose example the thrones of the old world were toppling to their fall, and the principles of republican liberty making rapid progress to ultimate triumph. Sir, the treason of Arnold will be forgotten in view of the greater baseness and treachery of Martin Van Buren.

Mr Chairman, there is another striking difference in the policy of the two great parties of this country, which has a material bearing upon this question of slavery. The Whig party is opposed to the acquisition of foreign territory; it is satisfied with the present limits of our country, and desires to preserve it as it is. The Democratic party is a party of progress. One of the leading features of its policy is "the extension of the area of human freedom." It was not satisfied with the annexation of Texas, but the President, by his indiscretion, involved us in an unnecessary, wasteful, and bloody war with Mexico, which has resulted in a still further extension of our territorial limits. By the treaty of peace we have acquired New Mexico and California. Which extension of our boundary has brought upon us, with all its excitements, difficulties, and dangers, this unwelcome question, which I hope we shall be able to adjust upon fair and equitable terms. But, if we shall get safely out of this difficulty, have we, in the policy of the Democratic party, any security for the future? Can we indulge a reasonable hope, if it be permitted to remain in power, that this same question, with all its embarrassments, will not again be presented to distract and disturb the councils of the nation upon the first opportunity that shall offer to extend our borders? General Cass seems to have an insatiable, morbid appetite for territorial aggrandizement. His imagination has been

fired by the poetic thought of an “Ocean-bound Republic,” and he thinks “that we would not be much disfigured if we were to swallow the whole of Mexico.” In reading the prospectus of the Campaign paper, issued from the office of the Union, in this city—the official paper, the organ of the Democratic party, and devoted to the election of General Cass, giving the plan and purposes, and commenting on the principles of Democracy—I find this striking paragraph:

“It (the Democratic party) contends for the glory and honor of the Republic, and for its increase and expansion as time and circumstances may demand. It does not believe that the Mississippi should have been its ultimate boundary, nor that its present boundaries should be permanent; but it holds that this great and glorious Union shall grow and expand, and diffuse the blessings of liberty over other contiguous States and Territories, as destiny may dictate, and humanity and justice approve.”

The Democratic Platform has no resolution upon this subject. The Baltimore Convention passed it by in silence. But here we have a distinct avowal from high authority of the policy of the party; it accords well with its history for the last few years; and, if we are to judge by the past, we may well regard this as a faithful exposition of its future policy. It is in the frequent recurrence of this question that there is danger to the country. It will come with accumulated difficulties and dangers upon every extension of our limits, and the true and wise course of the whole country is to avert it, maintain our present boundaries, and settle, by a fair, judicious, and liberal compromise, our present difficulties.

This question has ever been regarded as fraught with imminent peril to the Republic. What was the language of Thomas Jefferson in reference to the Missouri question, which in its day agitated this country from its centre to its circumference, and filled the minds of all patriotic men with apprehension for its safety. These are his words :

“ This momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment; but this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper.”

Then, sir, may I not ask if the interests of the South would not be safer under Whig than Democratic policy ? The policy of the Whig party is one of peace; it is opposed to wars of aggression and conquest; it concurs in opinion with Zachary Taylor, who, in his letter to Capt. Allison, says:

“ I look upon war, at all times and under all circumstances, as a national calamity, to be avoided if compatible with the national honor. The *principles* of our Government, as well as its true *policy*, is opposed to the subjugation of other nations and the dismemberment of other countries by conquest. In the language of the great Washington, “ Why should we quit our own to stand on foreign ground.”

By the elevation of the Whig party to power the present difficulties would be settled, and all cause of “new irritation” on this “momentous question” be removed ; but elect General Cass, and his policy of conquest and annexation would mark “deeper and deeper” this geographical line, to final separation. And, upon this position of the two parties, I am prepared to go before my con-

stituents and the South, and claim for the Whig party their confidence and support.

But, Mr. Chairman, our Democratic friends not only complain that General Taylor has said nothing upon the Wilmot Proviso, they make still further complaint, he refuses to give pledges to party; though a Whig, he is not an ultra one, and is determined, if elected, to enter upon his duties as Chief Magistrate untrammeled, looking to the Constitution alone as his rule of conduct. This, sir, in my humble opinion, is a proud, lofty, and patriotic position ; it is the true Republican ground, and has for its sanction the example of no less a name than that of the immortal Washington; it ought and does recommend him most strongly to the country.

General Cass, however, is not obnoxious to this complaint; none suspect him of a want of devotion to party; his course in the Senate of the United States exhibits him as an extreme and ultra partisan. He was never, I believe, a member of any legislative body, except for a short time of the Ohio legislature, in early life. From that time to the election of James K. Polk, he held office by Executive appointment with but little interruption, and was elected to the Senate about the time Mr. Polk was elected President. The Baltimore Convention of 1844 presented to the country its platform of principles, and among the resolves was one declaring our right to the whole of Oregon, up to $54^{\circ} 40'$, to be clear and unquestionable. The nominee, Mr. Polk, pledged himself to carry out the views and opinions of that Convention, and accordingly in his message to Congress asserted the extreme claim. General Cass maintained and defended the views of the President and the Convention, and insisted upon $54^{\circ} 40'$. Congress was for many months engaged in a most exciting and stormy debate upon the question. The country was agitated and excited in apprehension of war with England. It seemed inevitable. General Cass declared it to be inevitable. The Senator from Ohio, (Mr. ALLEN,) said that "the heart of the American people must be prepared for war." Our minister, however, negotiated a treaty, and settled upon the forty-ninth parallel of latitude. Mr. Polk's nerves gave way, and he sought to relieve himself by placing the responsibility upon the Senate. That patriotic body advised the ratification of the treaty, and saved the two countries from a bloody and expensive war. General Cass, however, true to the extreme demands of party, urged its rejection, and voted in a minority of fourteen against advising its ratification. This embarrassment being removed Mr. Polk turned upon Mexico, and by his unwise and imprudent course involved us in an unnecessary and wasteful war with that country, which war has just terminated, after more than two years duration, the expenditure of millions upon millions of the public money, and the loss of the lives of many thousands of our best citizens. We find General Cass still true to party, sustaining and defending the Administra-

tion at every step from its inception to its termination. And after Mr. Trist had negotiated a treaty of peace, and the Senate of the United States had ratified it with a few modifications, which rendered it necessary to return it to Mexico for the approval of the Mexican government, General Cass still urged upon the Senate the passage of the Ten Regiment bill. It finally passed that body by a party vote, and was only prevented from becoming a law by the Whig majority in this House; and results have made it manifest that the only effect of its passage would have been to increase the patronage of the President by giving him the appointment of some five hundred officers. As we advance the evidence thickens. At the last session of Congress, General Cass voted for the River and Harbor bill. Mr. Polk vetoed it. The Baltimore Convention nominated General Cass for President, and adopted a resolution repudiating internal improvement by the General Government. General Cass cordially approved it in condemnation of his own vote. The Democrats of the North and Northwest, however, say that the resolution of the Convention will not prevent General Cass from approving the River and Harbor bill. What say our Democratic friends of the South, who approve Mr. Polk's veto? Is he to be represented at the South as opposed to internal improvements, and at the North and West as the advocate of the improvement of rivers and harbors? "There are no tricks in plain and simple faith."

This is not all; the evidence of Gen. Cass's devotion to party does not stop here; after the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, which were won so triumphantly, with a force greatly inferior to that of the enemy in point of numbers, Gen. Taylor continued his march on the city of Monterey, and with 6,000 troops attacked that city, fortified and defended by an army of 10,000; the fierce and dreadful struggle continued for more than two days, when the enemy was compelled to surrender, and deliver up the city to Gen. Taylor. Terms of capitulation were agreed upon by a commission appointed by the commanders of each army; the commission on the part of the army of the United States was composed of the gallant and distinguished officers Worth, Henderson, and Davis, who agreed upon and approved the terms of the capitulation and armistice. The news of this brilliant victory was received with pride and exultation by the whole people, but James K. Polk, *Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy*, disapproved of the terms of the surrender. Afterwards, a resolution tendering the thanks of Congress to Gen. Taylor for his victory at Monterey was offered to this body; immediately the following proviso was offered: "Provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed into an approbation of the terms of the capitulation of Monterey." This proviso was annexed to the resolution of thanks by the vote of the Democratic party of this body; it was reported to the Senate for its adoption; Mr. Speight moved to amend the resolution by striking out the proviso, and Gen. Cass

voted in a minority of 15 against striking out; thus endeavoring to make it a resolution of censure, instead of thanks, offering that brave and gallant old soldier an insult instead of praise. What renders the vote of Gen. Cass the more remarkable is, that he, too, claims to be a soldier, and to have rendered his country some service upon the battle-field during the war of 1812, and his friends have conferred on him the distinguished appellation of "the hero of Hull's surrender;" but, forgetful of the soldier's sensibility, (how keenly he is alive to every impulse of honor, and how deeply wounded by a sense of injustice,) endeavored, at the behest of party, to prevent the expression by Congress of a nation's gratitude to him who had shed new lustre upon her arms by his unrivalled achievements. It is said that this proviso was not regarded as a 'censure; that Congress refused to vote it a censure. The amendment, offered by a gentleman not now a member of this body, to add the word "disapprobation," &c, that it might appear that Congress meant to express no opinion, was rejected, thereby fixing its character beyond dispute. The people so considered it, and many who voted for it lost their seats upon this floor.

In the progress of this war with Mexico many difficulties occurred between the President and the commanding officers. The first was with Gen. Scott; he was notified that his services would not be required in Mexico—Gen. Taylor was then high in the confidence of the Administration. On the 3d of July, 1846, I find in the Union, the "mouth-piece" of the President, the following tribute to this officer:

"The public sentiment in the South is highly favorable to General Taylor. In fact, he has 'won golden opinions' from all classes and from all sections of the country.

"The New Orleans Times of the 26th of May describes 'the largest meeting which it has ever seen in New Orleans, congregated within the walls of a public edifice.' It took place on the evening before, at the new Exchange. 'All that is distinguished for rank, talent, wealth, and influence of every shade of political opinion, were found there.' The object was to pour forth the popular feeling on the late brilliant achievements on the Rio Grande.

"The whole press of New Orleans and Mobile, Democrat or Whig, expresses its admiration and confidence in the commanding general, and protests against his being superceded by any other, however brave or distinguished."

After the battle of Monterey, not less brilliant than either Palo Alto or Resaca de la Palma, "a change came over the spirit of his dream." The quarrel between Gen. Scott and the President was reconciled, and Scott sent to take the chief command in Mexico. He had scarcely entered upon his line of operations when the President conceived that the public interest required the creation of a new office in the army, the office of Lieutenant General, and recommended to Congress the passage of a law for that purpose. After much difficulty, and repeated attempts, the bill passed the House. Its object was to supercede both General Taylor and Scott, the two men who rank first among all the military men of the age, and subject them to the command of a distinguished civilian, and distinguished only as a civilian, Col. Thomas H. Benton; for it was well understood at the time that, if the power was given to the

President, the appointment would have been conferred on him. When this bill was before the Senate, Mr. Mangum moved that it lie on the table, and said that he moved it as a test vote. Gen. Cass voted against it in a minority of 21. These are a few of the most prominent acts, during a space of little more than three years, by which Gen. Cass has established his claim to the title of an extreme ultra partisan.

But, sir, it seems that he was not entirely satisfied that his claim should rest upon this evidence. In his letter accepting the nomination of the Baltimore Convention, approving entirely and pledging himself to the support of its *Platform*, he says:

"The very first article in the Democratic creed teaches that the people are competent to govern themselves; it is, indeed, rather an axiom than an article of political faith. From the days of General Hamilton to our days, the party opposed to us—of whose principles he was the great exponent, if not the founder—while it has changed its name, has preserved essentially its identity of character; and the doubt he entertained and taught of the capacity of man for self-government, has exerted a marked influence upon its action and opinions. Here is the very starting-point of the difference between the two great parties which divide our country. All other differences are but subordinate and auxiliary to this, and may, in fact, be resolved into it."

Here, then, at the very moment that he accepts the nomination, and hopes to be elected to preside over the country under the influence of his attachment to party, he asperses the opinions, conduct, and motives of at least one-half of the American people.

Since Gen. Cass has thought proper to tender this issue in the approaching election, let us for a moment try the two great parties, and their leaders, upon it. The Whig party had its origin in its opposition to Executive abuse and encroachment. Every step of its history has been marked by its resistance to the improper and unconstitutional exercise of Executive power, to restrain it within its proper limits, and to give effect to the popular will, fairly expressed through the representatives of the people in Congress. Gen. Taylor, in his letter to Capt. Allison, assumes the same position. I give his own language:

"The power given by the Constitution to the Executive to interpose his veto is a high conservative power, but in my opinion should never be exercised except in cases of clear violation of the Constitution, or manifest haste and want of consideration by Congress. Indeed, I have thought that, for many years past, the known opinions and wishes of the Executive have exercised undue and injurious influence upon the legislative department of the Government; and for this cause I have thought our system was in danger of undergoing a great change from its true theory. The personal opinions of the individual who may happen to occupy the Executive chair ought not to control the action of Congress upon questions of domestic policy; nor ought his objections to be interposed where questions of constitutional power have been settled by the various departments of Government, and acquiesced in by the people."

"Upon the subject of the tariff, the currency, the improvement of our great highways, rivers, lakes, and harbors, the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected and carried out by the Executive."

The Democratic party, on the other hand, has ever been found ready to defend and sustain the Executive department in all its demands. I recollect no instance in which it has interposed to arrest the exercise of Executive power and prerogative. When the will of the people, expressed through their Representatives in Congress, has been *vetoed* by the President, it has rallied to his

support and sustained the act. It is unnecessary to enumerate the various instances of Executive encroachments, commencing with the removal of the depositories from the United States Bank. They are familiar to the country; and no one has more readily yielded his support to Executive demands and encroachments than Gen. Cass. Executive power and prerogative have rapidly increased under Democratic rule, until we find the republican position of General Taylor —“that the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected and carried out by the Executive”—fiercely assailed upon this floor, and by the Democratic press throughout the country. Yet, sir, it is claimed that the capacity of man for self-government is the leading, fundamental distinction between the two parties; it may be so; but the position of parties should be reversed. The doubt is with the miscalled Democratic party. As a charge upon the Whig party, it is unjust and unfounded, and refuted by its whole history, from its organization to the present hour. It has presented to the country for its support for President one, the leading feature of whose administration will be to carry into execution the will of this great people, fairly and deliberately expressed by their representatives, within constitutional limits. Gen. Zachary Taylor is emphatically the people’s man; and the Convention at Philadelphia but gave utterance to the wish of the people, as indicated all over the country, and in many instances without distinction of party, through mass meetings, State conventions, &c., in selecting him as their candidate for the Presidency.

He does not suit the mere partisan. Though a Whig, he will give no pledges to party. He has “no enemies to punish, and nothing but his country to serve.” He will go into office untrammeled. He is neither a Northern man with Southern principles, nor a Southern man with Northern principles. He is an American, whose patriotism is co-extensive with the broad limits of his whole country. He will not be the President of a party or section, but the President of the Nation; and will endeavor, by a wise, prudent, and just administration, to protect the interests of every portion of this wide spread Republic, and advance the prosperity of the whole.

It is said, though, that he is deficient in capacity; that he does not write his despatches and letters, they are written by some one else. I will call the venerable editor of the Union to the witness stand once more, and only once, and hear his evidence upon this point. In the Union of the 29th May, 1846, I find this high testimony:

“*The Pen worthy of the Sword.*—Nothing can be more happy, appropriate, yet dignified, than the despatches from General Taylor. They are worthy of the man and of the occasion which has called them forth. We thoroughly agree with the compliment that the New Orleans Courier pays to the general order of General Taylor, ‘giving thanks to his troops for their bravery and good conduct. The American reader will remark with pride and pleasure the striking contrast it exhibits to the tedious, bombastic, extravagant, vainglorious productions of the Mexican Generals. The neatness of its style is admirable—not a word too much, or in the wrong place

—all in fine keeping with the energy and decision with which his military operations are conducted.”

The veteran Gen. Gibson says that he served with him on seventeen courts martial, and that Gen. Taylor was invariably selected to draw up the reports and proceedings of the court, some of which were very voluminous.

The testimony of the Honorable John C. Spencer, late Secretary of War, of Colonel Humphrey Marshall, of Kentucky, and of General Persifer F. Smith, is equally conclusive. Evidence on this subject might be multiplied, but it is unnecessary. Such charges will pass, like the idle wind, unheeded. In Gen. Taylor the people see those high qualities which fit him for the highest station—a sound judgment, unsurpassed discretion, and incorruptible integrity. He is the man of the age, and peculiarly adapted to the crisis. In his election the drooping hopes of the patriot will revive, and he will indulge bright anticipations for the future; he sees in Zachary Taylor one who refuses to stand upon the platform of party, but takes his position upon the higher and broader platform—the Constitution, and brings to its interpretation a pure heart and clear head, having no purpose but the good of his country.

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